



February 26, 2018

Ms. Kelly Hammerle  
Chief, National Oil and Gas Leasing Program Development and Coordination Branch,  
Leasing Division, Office of Strategic Resources,  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (VAM-LD),  
45600 Woodland Road, Sterling, VA

Re: Comments for the 2019-2024 Draft Proposed National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program

Dear Ms. Hammerle,

NC Interfaith Power & Light represents hundreds of communities of faith united in a common call to protect our climate and God's Creation. We strongly oppose the proposal by BOEM (2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program) expand oil drilling on our country's outer continental shelf.

We see our oceans as a sacred part of God's Creation, and the very source of life. Oil drilling and associated spills cause irreparable harm to marine ecosystems, and to the people who live near our coasts and depend on those ecosystems for their livelihood.

The benefits of protecting our environment, marine animals, coastal economies, and people who could be harmed by oil and gas exploration, drilling, and the inevitable spills and disasters are far more important than the revenue that could be gained from leasing our shared resources for oil industry profits.

Economic benefits would more likely be achieved through renewable energy investments which create good local jobs without incurring the risks and costs of government funded clean up and health remediation efforts after an oil spill. In addition, tourism (an annual \$120 billion industry) would not be jeopardized, as it would be by oil drilling.

We are also including a statement unanimously signed by the NC Council of Churches Governing Board, representing 26 distinct judicatories from 18 denominations with 1.5 million congregants across the state who urge this administration to rescind this misguided proposal and protect our coasts, our climate, and our people by shifting your focus to renewable energy rather than more dangerous oil and gas drilling.

Finally, given the urgent need to address climate change and transition to a renewable energy future, investing more in fossil fuel exploration and development is short sighted and a waste of our country's resources.

We therefore urge you to rescind this misguided proposal and protect our coasts, our climate, and our people by shifting your focus to renewable energy rather than dangerous oil and gas drilling.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue affecting our oceans, our citizens, and our climate.

Sincerely,

Susannah Tuttle, MDiv.  
Director, NC Interfaith Power & Light